

# Ownership

If private ownership of economic enterprises is a purely instrumental arrangement, and self-government is a fundamental and inalienable right, then any legal entitlement to private ownership of the economy is *subordinate* to the right of self-government, and in a democratic country the people and their representatives would be entitled to decide through the democratic process how far any particular arrangement may, on balance, achieve their values. They could decide that private ownership of economic enterprises was desirable, that public or social ownership was preferable, or that any one of an indefinite number of possible combinations would be best.

**Robert A. Dahl,**  
*A Preface to Economic Democracy*